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THE BIBLICAL WORLD

CONTINUING

The Old and New Testament Student

VOLUME XIV AUGUST, 1899 NUMBER 2

EDITORIAL LETTER.

TO THE READERS:

The relation existing between a teacher and a pupil, or between a pastor and a member of his parish, is in most cases a very close and tender one. There seems to be every reason why a similar relation should exist between the editor of a journal and its readers. Experience shows that in very many cases friendships spring up which prove to be most helpful. If the work of the editor is to be in any sense successful, there must exist a strong sympathy between him and his readers; a sympathy which, on the one hand, will incite the editor to a better and more satisfactory effort, and, on the other hand, lead the reader to view charitably the mistakes which the editor will inevitably make.

Does some such sympathy exist between the editorial staff of THE BIBLICAL WORLD and the several thousand readers who from month to month are brought into contact with their work? It is a satisfaction to be able to make the statement that no day passes without producing evidence of the existence of this good feeling. In many different ways this evidence is presented, and these tokens of appreciation have served, ten thousand times, as a source of encouragement in the face of what seemed to be insuperable difficulties.

We have often thought, however, that if our readers could be taken more fully into our confidence, greater things might be accomplished; and if, on our side, we could know more accurately the thoughts of those whom we address from month to month, we should be better able to prepare the message. It is a good saying that one's work must be judged, at least in part, from the point of view of the purpose with which it is undertaken. We have asked ourselves not infrequently: Do the readers of THE BIBLICAL WORLD understand the real purpose of those who direct its policy? or do the readers appreciate, from time to time, the purpose and the meaning of the policy pursued — for example, in a particular number or in a particular volume? And we have chided ourselves that opportunity has not been made to explain somewhat in detail the motive which has led to this or that editorial action.

The difficulty has seemed to arise from the fact that no appropriate place could be found in which to enter into that familiar conversation with the readers of THE BIBLICAL WORLD, the result of which would be to make these things more clear. And, besides, no convenient or satisfactory method has been suggested by the employment of which the readers of the journal could make suggestions to the editors.

We now propose a new departure. Perhaps it might be called coöperative journalism. It will be our plan henceforth to state clearly and definitely what we have in mind from time to time, and to ask in reference to this or that question the advice and judgment of those with whom we are working. In other words, we wish the readers of the journal to join with us in determining, or at all events in executing, the editorial policy. We ask our friends to be as frank with us as we shall show ourselves to be with them. We wish their help. We believe that we can render better service if we may have that help. The first step will be to cultivate a good and fair understanding on both sides. *Will you, the readers, join hands with us, the editors?*

Many of our readers have been kind enough to say something, in one form or another, in reference to the suggestions concerning the Sunday-school work which have appeared in recent

numbers of THE BIBLICAL WORLD. Some have already observed that the last number, with its articles on The Book of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes, etc., was touching closely on the ground covered by the International Sunday-school Lessons. When it is seen that the present number deals with Ezekiel as did the last number with Daniel, and that the remaining numbers of this volume take up consecutively Haggai and Zechariah, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi, our purpose will be understood. If the reader puts side by side with this the special contributions on important phases of Sunday-school work — for example, Methods of Conducting Sunday-school Classes; the Sunday-school Ritual; Education in Benevolence; the Cultivation of the Spirit of Worship in the Sunday School — it will be evident that the practical side of Sunday-school work is being considered as well as the more technical work of teaching.

It is our belief that the Sunday school is an agency in which ten times as much should be accomplished as at present. Nearly every member of the editorial staff of THE BIBLICAL WORLD is directly connected with practical Sunday-school work; that is, doing work in a Sunday school. Time and thought are being devoted to this subject, just as one would give time and thought to laboratory work in chemistry or in physics; and with the coöperation of those who have had still larger experience, and who have promised to assist us, we are hoping that perhaps some contribution, however slight, may be made to the cause of Sunday-school study. THE BIBLICAL WORLD henceforth will be conducted primarily for the assistance of those who directly or indirectly are *teachers* of the Bible.

This is not a serious deviation from the policy of the past. It will involve, however, a more definite selection of articles, and a better correlation of material. The tremendous waste of energy now being made in connection with Sunday-school work, the thoroughly unsatisfactory character of the results attained as urged by those who are most enthusiastic, justify us, we believe, in turning our thought in this direction.

There is one question which we wish to put to every

reader. It is one for which we beg consideration and, so far as it may be convenient, candid answer. Is it more helpful to have the bibliography published in its present form once in three months, the attempt being made to include everything that might be thought of value? or would it be preferable, in accordance with the custom of the past, to have a more select and less technical bibliography with each number of THE BIBLICAL WORLD? This is a definite question, and the experience of our readers about this would be of great service to us. No change can be effected now until the next volume. Would such a change be recommended?

And now, will the reader — whoever he may be, or wherever he may live, whether old or young, whether professional teacher or preacher of the Bible — receive this letter in the spirit in which it has been written? Will he give us his help? If he will do so, we, in turn, promise him better things in the future than he has ever received from us in the past.

We subscribe ourselves,

Yours, for a better understanding of the will of God as it is contained in the Scriptures,

THE EDITORS.